

Emblem Glyphs in Classic Maya Inscriptions: From Single to Double Ones as a Means of Place of Origin, Memory and Diaspora

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Abstract: The use of more than one emblem glyph as royal title is one of the least explained features of Classic Maya politics. Epigraphers suggest that double or triple emblem glyphs indicate dynastic mergers, although in several cases it could point to the move of a dynasty from one place to another. Women played an important part in connecting royal houses but in many instances their role is not well spelled out in the inscriptions. There is no overall pattern, however examination of several examples from different regions allows to propose plausible explanations on why certain rulers had double emblem glyphs.

Keywords: epigraphy; emblem glyphs; politics; toponyms; Classic Maya.

Resumen: El uso de más de un glifo emblema como título real es una de las características menos explicadas e la política del Clásico Maya. Los epigrafistas sugieren que glifos emblema dobles o triples indican fusiones dinásticas, aunque en varios casos podrían señalar el movimiento de una dinastía de un lugar a otro. Las mujeres jugaron un papel importante en las relaciones entre las casas reales, pero en muchos casos su rol no es descrito en detalle en las inscripciones. No hay un patrón general, sin embargo el examen de varios ejemplos de diferentes regiones permite proponer explicaciones plausibles sobre por qué algunos gobernantes tenían glifos emblema dobles.

Palabras clave: epigrafía; glifos emblema; política; topónimos; periodo clásico maya.

Emblem glyphs are a ubiquitous element of Classic Maya inscriptions and scholars have utilized them to model the Classic Maya political organisation and politics (Berlin 1958; Culbert 1996; Marcus 1973; Martin & Grube 2008). As scholars still disagree on the general meaning of the emblem glyphs, this chapter deals with one aspect of the several facets of these glyphs, namely the question of when the rulers operated such emblems as tokens of the identity of place embedded in the cultural memory of their ancestors.

Emblem glyphs were one of the most frequent and important titles in the monumental discourse, and it was a matrix of the memory of myth, history and migration. Memory as such refers to our human capacity to remember things that happened to us, or to others. Not only individuals, but also groups construct their memory, which has been designated as ‘cultural memory’ by many scholars and which is entangled with ethnicity, rituals, orality and writing, all of which contribute to the maintenance of a

society's structure. Indeed, when a group of human beings stops remembering their own past, this is frequently considered tantamount to the disappearance of the group itself.

According to Assmann (1992), memory is subdivided into individual remembrance and collective remembrance. The former is connected to one person and usually only individuals participate in their remembrances. Concerning the latter, as groups also construct memory, to remember collectively is by necessity to store memories into 'figures of remembrance'. Such figures are connected to space and time, and they are group-specific and always reconstructive. Strictly speaking, it is not the past that remains in memory, but rather what a society is able to reconstruct of it in its present. Collective memory is not a unified whole but can again be subdivided into 'communicative' and 'cultural memory'. While the first refers to a memory that is shared freely among the members of a group and connected to a time span ranging to as much as century, the other is fixed and commemorates ancient times. In a table which is highly enlightening, Assmann (2004: 56) contrasts the main characteristics of 'communicative' and 'cultural memory':

	Communicative	Cultural
<i>Contents</i>	Historical experience in his/her life	Mythic ancient history, absolute past
<i>Forms</i>	Informal, natural and interaction; commonplace	Demand foundation, formal, ceremony and ritual
<i>Mediatory channels</i>	Organic remembrance and individual experience	Closed and objectified means of expressions, symbols, orality, writing, dance etc.
<i>Time</i>	80-100 years, 3-4 generations horizon which runs through to the present	Mythic past and ancient time
<i>Carriers</i>	Nonspecific	A specialized carrier of tradition such as priest, Brahmin, Rabbi etc.

I shall argue that the emblem glyph was a title that subsumed a collective memory of a group, which originally resided in a particular settlement, or *ch'en*, and I further presume

Table 1. 'Communicative' and 'cultural memory' (Assmann 2004: 56).

that such social units find their origin in residential plaza groups. The main sign of a given emblem glyph signals the place of origin for all individuals bearing this title and who claimed descent from a given ancestor who lived in the same site, and they reflect real or fictive blood relations. The founder of the *ch'en* may ultimately have claimed to be descended from an aspect of a deity in the mythic or absolute past. Any reference to territory that emblem glyphs may have had was of lesser importance and shifted in

the political landscape due to the migrations of the families who used them (see Martin 2005; Helmke & Awe 2008: 75-76). Therefore, the emblem glyph is one of the elements Assmann called the ‘mediatory channels’ of cultural memory. The emblem glyph is embedded in the monumental discourse of the public and private inscriptions in cities of the Lowlands, and it is one of the most important symbols of identity of the polities in the Classic Period.

In this chapter I have listed several examples of how the rulers employed emblem glyphs in multiple contexts as a cultural memory of their group. Before presenting the examples, I shall treat the antecedents for the conceptualization of the emblem glyph by previous scholars, and thereafter I shall present my interpretation of the emblem glyph. Thereafter, I shall present my idea about the formation of the plaza groups at Dos Pilas and Copan. Deep time ancestor cults are the topics that I will address afterwards. Lastly, I shall present three sites (Piedras Negras, Bonampak and Yaxchilan) which had double-emblem glyphs that were used by their rulers for a sufficient length of time and in sufficient texts, both locally and in foreign references, to analyze the pattern of their usage. As a result, it becomes possible to reconstruct the history of inter-house alliances by the means of the collective memory of certain groups inside a polity.

Antecedents

The political organization of the Classic Maya has been debated since the beginning of Maya studies and scholars still continue to discuss the size of polities, the behaviour of hegemonic states and whether the emblem glyph main sign referred to a polity, a city, or some other part of the settlement (e.g. Bíró 2011a). Heinrich Berlin (1958) identified emblem glyphs in Classic Period inscriptions when he postulated that they were emblematic for particular sites. In his original paper, Berlin did not specifically argue for any particular meaning, but he suggested three possibilities: the name of the city; the name(s) of the patron deity, or deities, of a particular city; or the name of the ruling dynasty of the city. He also discovered that apparently some cities had more than one emblem glyph, although he did not suggest any solution to explain this pattern.

Researchers after Berlin have discussed these three suggestions but have not proposed any new interpretation. Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960: 471) was “inclined to think that it refers to lineage or dynasty rather than to place”, whereas Thomas Barthel suggested that it “seems to concern place-names as well as ethnic names” (Barthel 1968: 120). Joyce Marcus (1973: 913) argued that an emblem glyph refers to “the site, as well as the territory subject to it”. David Kelley, however, argued that the main signs of emblem glyphs are place names (Kelley 1976: 215).

Later on, Peter Mathews & John Justeson (1984: 216) maintained that the main sign refers to “the political unit over which one site held dominion”.¹ The later opinion of Mathews (1996: 26) was that the main signs of an emblem glyph referred to the city itself and the territory subject to it. Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube (1994) accepted that the main signs of emblem glyphs are toponyms referring to the polity of a given archaeological site where they occur. David Stuart and Stephen Houston (1994: 2-7) identified place names in the inscriptions, which were different from known emblem glyph main signs and they concluded that emblem glyphs stood for the names of Classic Maya states and that the royal seats instead had their proper names.

Subsequently, most epigraphers accepted the difference between an actual place name and the main signs of emblem glyphs, and this understanding was expressed by Linda Schele and Peter Mathews (1998: 23) as follows: “emblem glyphs named the kingdoms that dotted the political landscape, and within these kingdoms there were locations identified by place names”.

This same conceptualisation of emblem glyph main signs is also found in more recent works (Martin & Grube 2008: 17), where main signs continue to be viewed as references to the name of a particular kingdom or polity. In a discussion about the political geography of Southern Campeche, Grube (2005: 98) discussed a difference between emblem glyphs and “toponymic titles” and thus revived an earlier idea of Houston’s (1986) about “problematic emblem glyphs”. Erik Boot (2005: 383-384) thought that emblem glyph main signs were indeed place names, but he has not specified his idea any further. He has identified at least one emblem glyph main sign that does not appear to refer to a particular kingdom or site, but to one particular region (Boot 2005: 511).

Martin (2005: 12) has dealt with emblem glyph main signs and tentatively concluded that “in essence, these emblem names seem to label royal houses whose connections to specific territories are less intrinsic than habitual”. Much along these lines, Christophe Helmke and Jaime Awe (2008: 75) have stated: “los glifos emblema servían ante todo para exaltar el título de los miembros más destacados de las cortes reales. Es precisamente debido a que la mayoría de los linajes reales mayas residieron en el mismo lugar en el transcurso de la historia, que muchos emblemas *parecen* referirse a sitios específicos”. More recently, Alexandre Tokovinine argued that emblem glyphs are “places of origin” and they refer to a smaller entity than the city itself (Tokovinine 2011, 2013; see also Helmke and Kupprat, this volume). Specifically, Tokovinine argued that:

1 “Emblem Glyphs [were] functioning as royal titles (they invariably occur in royal name phrases) [...] The ‘divine’ interpretation of the prefix is still far from proven but is viewed favourably by many epigraphers. The main sign is viewed by most epigraphers as a place-name, referring either to the city itself or to the territory that it controlled or to both. And the ‘lord’ is precisely the title that we would expect to find in a royal name phrase” (Mathews 1996: 25).

[...] there is no evidence to sustain the ‘polity name’ hypothesis. Instead, place names incorporated into the royal title should rather be interpreted as the most salient, highlighted features in the representations of the political landscape created by each Classic Maya regime. Such features do not necessarily correspond to the largest spatial entities within the political landscape. There may be little or no correspondence to the immediate physical landscape of Classic Maya sites as some of the place names in the ‘emblem glyphs’ are locations in deep time (Tokovinine 2011: 91).

For the sake of comparison, I have recently argued that:

There is no evidence in the inscriptions that emblem glyphs functioned as polity names. They were specific places, whole sites or site areas, and indicated the origin of a given royal family [...] Therefore I propose that emblem glyph main signs are toponyms. They labelled royal houses and their connection to the ancestral origin place was very strong as they remained constant even if the family moved to another place. Through them, pieces of a Classic Period elite conception of territory are expressed in connection not only to an actual landscape but to places of origin intertwined with codes of legitimacy (Bíró 2012: 59-60).

The most recent proposal by Gronemeyer (2012: 13) is that of “the emblem glyph as an emic identifier for the elite groups governing polities”, although this label remains difficult to conceive.

The concept of emblem glyph

The emblem glyph is a title that refers to several individuals, usually the king and his immediate family, in the glyphic texts. It is composed of the office *ajaw*, which indicates the title of the person, and later, from the 5th century onward, the adjective *k’uhul*, meaning ‘holy, divine, sacred’ was added before the main sign. I have previously argued that in the majority of the cases, the emblem glyph main signs were toponyms (Bíró 2012). They are formed in different ways, e.g. by using the suffixes *-il*, *-ul* and *-al* (‘abundance of’; Pakb’ul, Mutul, Kanul, and so on); describing natural phenomena such as *ha’* ‘water’ (Pip Ha’, K’ihn Ha’, Popo’ Ha’, Wak Ha’, Yax Ha’, Ik’ Ha’ and Itz Ha’, but see the arguments of Boot 2005: 383-384), *witz* ‘hill, mountain’ (K’an Witznal, Kat Witz, Hix Witz, Witz Nal), *tun* ‘stone’ (Lakamtun) and *chan* ‘sky’ (Pa’chan). Other phenomena tied to the cultural sphere include *nal* ‘maize (field)’ and *nah* ‘house’ (Bíró 2012; Tokovinine 2013).

Going by this rather short list, I concur with the hypotheses that the emblem glyph main signs were originally toponyms and that they referred to very specific places, such as mountains, rivers or just one part of a river, or buildings and other natural/artificial phenomena. They were the same as other toponymic titles and the data strongly support that there ultimately was no difference between complete emblem glyph main signs and toponymic titles. The rulers of Tikal, Calakmul, Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan, Tonina, Xuklah, Ak’e, Naranjo, Copan etc. all used their emblem glyph main signs

as toponyms and without the *k'uhul* adjective from the Early Classic period onwards (Bíró 2012; Tokovinine 2013). At Tikal, Naranjo and Piedras Negras, it is probable that the emblem glyph main signs referred to a part of the site, whereas at Naranjo, Piedras Negras and Copan the main signs from the earliest periods specifically indicate concrete sites of royal centres, or the name of a building (Bíró 2011a; Tokovinine 2007, 2013).

Nevertheless, I believe that for a better understanding of the emblem glyph there is more work to be done regarding the conceptualization² of this title employed in several contexts. This concept belongs to one of the many political vocabularies that prevailed during the Classic Period and is one of the key concepts of the institution of kingship.

The investigation of political vocabularies is undertaken within several theoretical frameworks (Koselleck 2003; Richter 1986, 1987; Schmidt 1999; Skinner 2002). In the framework of a 'history of ideas', it is assumed that in human cultures there is a set of conceptualisations describing the relationship of social actors and the organisation of their respective actions. This set of concepts can be expressed by one or more lexemes (for example State, Nation State, Republic, Liberal Democracy and so on); however, not all concepts equate to a word, and vice versa.

Slightly different, but equally perceptive insights can be drawn from the German school of 'conceptual history' (see Koselleck 2003 for an application). Just as in the history of ideas, they make a distinction between words and concepts, and they maintain that every concept is represented by a word, but not every word carries a concept within itself (Koselleck 2003: 134). Reinhart Koselleck (2003: 134) noted that political concepts generalize and have multiple meanings (for example that the concept of State in the 20th century Europe was different from that in the 4th century Roman Empire).

Such an investigation into Classic Maya political vocabulary is difficult to undertake at present as there are problems in interpreting words and their political reference or in finding a meaningful way to comprehend the conceptualisations of the Classic Period elite. An important obstacle is the lack of dictionaries and more personal reflections by the elite themselves, which could have helped to disentangle the multiple meanings and possible changes within semantic fields. Simply put, Maya epigraphers first have to deal with the enormous task of selecting the Classic Period political vocabulary and then examining the multiple references of words in different contexts.

2 Concepts are widely investigated and hotly debated; indeed, 'concept' is one of those words that scholars use successfully, even though they are not able to define it consensually. I use 'concept' here as a sort of abstraction which subsumes various specific instances under one unit of meaning and helps to form more abstractions in turn. The 'emblem glyph' is an etic concept that scholars use heuristically and whose function they reconstruct in different contexts and within a specific genre of monumental discourse, such as the stelae, lintels, ceramics etc.

Both Quentin Skinner (2002: 175-184) and Koselleck (2003: 121-145) have argued persuasively that actual words and their use – or their correspondence to concepts and changes within conceptual usage – reflect the social conditions in which a given language is embedded in various ways. Social and political conflicts can be examined by analysing the use of words and concepts. As Koselleck (2003: 132-133) has pointed out, there are at least three different classes of ‘political concepts’: first, those which are relatively stable and are used without much change; second, those which changed drastically in content, although they are referred to by similar words; and third, those which are totally new and also use new words (neologisms). These changes can reflect various social transformations, especially in the case of neologisms, or when major terms are re-analysed and put into use in very different contexts from the original ones.

I have argued that some of the emblem glyph main signs were preserved well into the Colonial era, but that the concept changed (the second class, above) and that it became the first element of ethnogenesis (see Assmann 2004: 142-158). There is evidence that some Classic Period emblem glyphs remained in use as the names of ethnic groups during the Early Colonial era: *Po’Popo’* or *Popo’ Ha’* were variants of the emblem glyph of Tonina in the Ocosingo Valley, whose inhabitants were called *poo uinicob* in a 17th century Chontal document (Ayala 1995: xx); *Lakamtun* was the emblem glyph of El Palmar near the seponymous river, which was also the home of the *lacantun uinicob* in the 17th century (Ayala 1995; Stuart 2007a); *Itza’* or *Itz Ha’* was the emblem glyph of Itzimte Sakluk, south of Lake Peten Itza in the Classic Period, and then it was mentioned in the Northern Yucatan in Spanish and Yukatec sources as *itza uinic* and *ch’ib’al* (patronym), and then, in modern times, it refers to an ethnic group Itzaj in the Lake Peten Itza area. Another emblem glyph, namely *Chatahn*, probably remained in use until the 18th century as a patronymic name mentioned as *ah chata* in the northeastern Peten (Boot 2005: 505-516).

While all these names occurred in the main signs of emblem glyphs in Classic Ch’olan texts, they came to refer to ethnic groups with different languages later: the *poo uinicob* were Tz’eltal speakers; the *lacantun uinicob* were Ch’ol speakers, and the *itza* spoke a Yukatekan language. At present, I do not know how to link a specific emblem glyph to any of the ethnic groups mentioned in the colonial sources; however, there might have been an ongoing process of ethnic development not well attested in Classic Period texts. Maybe some of the Classic Maya *k’uhul X ajaw* had become *ch’ib’al*, and later the vassals who belonged to the family lineage turned into *winik*, the ‘people of the Itza’ *ch’ib’al*, although the same process might already have begun in the Early Classic period.

It is my belief that this is the elite group tied to the emblem-glyph-title, which is comparable to (but not identical with) the Postclassic and Colonial Yukatek *ch’ib’al*,

who were an exclusive socio-political group which resided in *cuchteel* or neighbourhood (Gabbert 2004; Okoshi Harada 2011; Restall 1997; Roys 1957). These groups were usually exogamous and their members had the same patronymic name (Xiu, Cupul, Canul etc.) The *ch'ib'al* were not localized and their members lived in several villages (*cah*) and they dwelt in one or more *cuchteel* within a village; however, there was always a centre or the most important town (*nob cah*) where the superior leader would reside. In an ideal situation, the members of the same *ch'ib'al* helped each other, although they could also belong to opposing war factions. Often, the commoners (*macehual*) and the nobles (*almehen*) belonged to the same *ch'ib'al*, albeit that the idea of the 'helping' ethos was usually more common among of the noble ones, i.e. at the level of the 'dynasty' (Gabbert 2004: 6). They had patron deities and claimed that their ancestors had come from several places, usually from foreign lands.

There is also another analogy to construct the communities in the Postclassic Period of the Guatemalan Highlands which were composed of the *amak* and *chinamit* (Braswell 2006; Carmack 1981; Fox 1988; Fox & Cook 1996; McAnany 1995). The *amak/chinamit* were settled by the minimal, principal and major lineages (*c'ajolaxel*) of the elite, which were divided by different mechanisms, such as factional competition and how they distributed the right of usufruct of the lands for the commoners who lived in the surrounding regions of the *chinamit*.

Ultimately, the Classic *ch'en* is compared to the *cuchteel* or the *amak/nimja* or the 'great house'. As a result of factional competition, members of the ruling family had often migrated to the outer regions and become a diaspora, taking the cult of their patron deities and their ancestors and the name of their *ch'en* with them. Thus, the emblem glyph was first and foremost a title used by a status-person (*ajaw* and *sajal*) who was claimed to be a unique ancestor coming from such a place.

The plaza groups and the emblem glyph: Dos Pilas and Copan

Sometimes, scholars make discoveries fortuitously, and the same is true for those working with archaeological and epigraphic data. Dos Pilas is located in the Petexbatun area, where an intrusive elite of Tikal had founded a settlement and where the kings later controlled a sizeable territory by mechanisms of warfare and marriage (Martin & Grube 2008; Guenter 2003; Houston 1993). Ruler 1 of Dos Pilas, B'ajlaj Chan K'awil had the Mutul emblem glyph with main sign of Tikal; however, he established himself in the Main Plaza of Dos Pilas (K4-L5; see Houston 1993: 18-19).³ Apart from the court area, there were at least two groups at the site, which were named Murcielagos (M4-N5) and El Duende (O4-P5). The Main Plaza and Bat Cave had been constructed earlier, while

3 The father of B'ajlaj Chan K'awil was K'ihnich Muwan Jol II, the 23rd or 24th ruler of Tikal (Guenter 2003: 3).

the construction of El Duende began later, around AD 700. The Main Plaza has a toponym which is composed of the T369 ('Dragon') *Ha'al*⁴ and El Duende's name is *K'ihn Ha' Nal* (Stuart & Houston 1994: 19-20, 84-88). At present, there is no inscription that mentions the name of the Murcielagos group. T369-*Ha'al* was built under the rulership of the first king, and consequently every new king erected one or more monuments in this area, while at El Duende most of the monuments had – unusually – been erected by one ruler, Itzamnaj K'awil (698-702).

Tokovinine (2013: 14-16) has argued that after AD 727, both toponyms referred to a single place, such as T367-*Ha'al K'ihn Nal Ha'* in local and foreign texts (in Cancuen). The Mutul toponym was not referred to as a *ch'en* at Dos Pilas and none of the inscriptions mention the original site of the ruler's ancestors.⁵ In addition, the size of Dos Pilas was relatively small compared to other ancient sites situated in the Petexbatun, in the Northeast Peten or the Usumacinta region because those cities were founded before the Late Classic Period.⁶ Although Dos Pilas is a more recent site, it is used as an analogy to analyse the foundation history of other cities in order to better understand the pattern of a new settlement in the Early Classic Period.⁷

As stipulated above, the monumental epicenter of Dos Pilas can be divided into three major areas, and two of them are mentioned in the texts. Yet, there is no evidence in the texts that the different areas were owned by non-royal nobles, while it is possible

4 A tentative reading was proposed by Helmke & Nielsen (2014).

5 In the lower register of Dos Pilas Stela 16, *Yax Mutul* is as an icon above the Turtle with a cave inside. The latter icon is referred to in several other sites' texts as *yohl abkul* 'the heart of the Turtle Place' and it is connected to the ancestors. Therefore, Stela 16 symbolised the place of the ancestors of the rulers.

6 Another component of dynastic foundations which has rarely been mentioned is the 'numbered successor title' or *tz'akb'ul* (Grube 1988; Riese 1984, 1988; Schele 1992). Rulers and nobles of several cities used a count which indicated their position in a line of officeholders. Not every ruling family used the *tz'akb'ul* title, while nevertheless it is possible to differentiate between two groups. In AD 537, Tikal had its 21st ruler, in AD 546 Naranjo had its 35th ruler, in AD 618 Altar de Sacrificios its 36th ruler in power, and in Tres Islas the 19th ruler acceded in AD 415. Meanwhile, the 10th ruler of Copan acceded in AD 551 and the 10th ruler of Yaxchilan in AD 526. This means that roughly in the first half of the 6th century, Tikal and Naranjo had ruler lists twice as long as those of either Copan or Yaxchilan. In one group, the title indicates counts before ca. AD 300, and in the second one, they do not reach back any further than AD 300. Tikal, Naranjo, Altar de Sacrificios, Tamarindito and Tres Islas are in the first group and Copan and Yaxchilan in the second. According to the *tz'akb'ul* titles, the Northeast Peten and the Pasion regions saw a substantially earlier start of dynastic rule than the Usumacinta, the Southeast region or the Eastern Yucatan (Coba). This parallels the appearance of the earliest contemporary inscriptions, which cluster in the Northeast Peten and the Pasion region.

7 Another verb – T548-**yi** – recently suggested by Dmitri Beliaev and Albert Davletshin is **KAJ** (2002-2003: 12) and its meaning is 'to settle, reside' (Tokovinine 2013: 80-81). David Stuart (2004b) has previously hinted that this verb refers to a 'foundation' event of the site. However, this newly deciphered verb suggests that a ruler and/or his family settled at a site which they had not founded as a settlement *per se*, but that they had searched for an already existing site. This is proved by the archaeological data of several settlements.

that the recent foundation of the site would not have triggered a process where the royal lineage branched off into several sub-lineages which would then occupy different palatial groups. Furthermore, it is obvious from the Dos Pilas example that the emblem glyph was portable to other locations where the ruler could employ it as a tool for legitimacy.

In contrast to Dos Pilas, the rulers of Copan used the same mechanism to found a new site, however, the ruling dynasty and the non-royal elite had enough time to branch into several groups because of the time factor and thus they occupied several plaza groups. Nevertheless, the question in the Copan case is still whether the emblem glyph refers to a foreign toponym or to some local place name.

In the early 5th century a new ruler arrived at Copan, bringing with him K'awil, a symbol of power, from the *win-te' naah*, which maybe was one of the temples of Teotihuacan (Stuart 2000, 2004a; Fash et al. 2009). The founder, Yax K'uk' Mo', supposedly hailed from Caracol in the Maya Mountains, although he was presumably not a member of the ruling dynasty who utilised the emblem glyph of K'ahntu. The most important plaza group at the site was Ux Witz Ha' ('Three Mountains Water' – the toponym of Caracol). The new king settled in the Copan Valley and his new town was named Ux Wintik (or later Chan Wintik). Other scholars have already suggested that Ux Wintik was the name of the Acropolis, the central area of the site (Fash 1991; Schele & Freidel 1990; Stuart 2004a; Tokovinine 2013). There are enough examples to suggest that Ux Wintik was a *chan ch'en*⁸ in texts like the emblem glyph of Copan (T756[528]-**pi-PUJ/pu**; Stuart & Houston 1994: 23-26).

Elisabeth Wagner (2006) has suggested that the settlement was divided in four divisions: the Principal Group, Las Sepulturas, Salamar and Comerdero. She has also suggested that each division was somehow associated to a cardinal direction. Barbara Fash (2005) has used iconographic and ethno-historical data to propose four similar divisions and she has compared them to the ethnographic divisions of settlements of Ch'orti or *sian otot*. Wagner (2006) has recognized that the 9N-8 group (on the basis of the text on the 9N-82 bench and that of Altar W) was a dwelling of the Koxop Lord in the 8th century, however, there is no evidence that all buildings of this plaza group were within Koxop (for example 8N-11).

Conversely, Mak'ab' Chanal (*ajk'uhun*), who dedicated the 9N-82 bench, claimed that one of his ancestors was the sixth ruler of Copan and that therefore this lineage had branched off from the ruling dynasty around the last decade of the 5th century (Bíró 2011b). Another plaza group, close to the *sacbe* leading from the Principal Group to the Copan Village, was named Bih Nah or the 'Road House' (10K-4 bench). The title

8 'Community', 'town', literally 'sky-cave' (Boot 2009: 46; Montgomery 2007).

of the leader at that group was a *k'uhul yax chahk wayab'*, maybe indicating his priestly office (Wagner 2006).

Another area was referred to in two monuments, namely on Altar K and Stela P (Bíró 2010). The former was dedicated in AD 682 by a non-royal noble and the other, *sajal*, came from the 'edge' of Yutuk (*ajti' yutuk*). The monument was close to Structure 6 in the western area of the Middle Plaza.

The other monument, the Stela P, was dedicated by K'ahk' Uti' Chan Yopat in AD 623 and described events that happened at that time and were crucial to creating a locality, even though it remained connected to the first ruler's foundation. The first episode narrated how the stela was erected and how the king engendered the blood for the gods (*ub'ah uch'ahb' ta k'uh*), lists the Paddlers, Great Father God, Elder Brother God, Four Lords, Nine K'awiil etc. The second episode is a magnificent narration about the engendering of gods at different places throughout the valley. The verse construction has several couples and even parallel sentences.

The first event repeats the engendering formula of the first episode. The gods are put in a parallel clause: the Paddlers with the Grandfather and Elder Brother, and then follow the Four Lords and Nine K'awiil (and at the end maybe a triad of gods). After this clause, the image-formula (*ub'ah*, although the block is broken) is recounted again with the Paddlers and then the story goes on to describe different building events in each part of the settlement. It is very important that the first name was Yutuk (maybe designating Group 9 or the Copan Village), and that it is followed by Ux Wintik, finishing with the emblem main sign. I believe that the first two places (Yutuk and Ux Wintik) are settlement divisions, or neighbourhoods, within the T756[528]-**pi-PUJ/pu**.⁹

The next phrase again uses the image-formula and the king who had put in order and engendered sacrifice for several Proto-Nawatl gods, beginning with the epithets 'First Gods-First Lords' (in Classic Ch'olan) and followed by the gods Wakuxaj, Kilikum, Mapatz'in and K'alotz'i[n], and finally the place, Mala' Ux Ajal where the gods had come from (Bíró & Davletshin n.d.; Prager & Wagner 2008). The last phrase names the king, Yax K'uk' Mo' as the first ruler of Copan.

There is evidence from other inscriptions that Yax K'uk' Mo' may have travelled to Teotihuacan and there received the political objects of legitimacy, such as the effigy

9 There are two unique words in the corpus of Classic Maya inscriptions. They are composed of the roots *pat* and *ch'en* 'to build' and 'cave' with the third person singular ergative pronoun *u-* following two derivation suffixes: *-n-* 'intransitivizer' and *-aj* 'thematic suffix' (Lacadena 2004). Usually, the epigraphers identify this complex suffix *-n-aj* as non-CVC transitive derived passive, however the third ergative pronoun suggests that the words are either transitive verbs, participles or nouns. However, Gronemeyer (2011: 323) has recently explained that both roots might be turned into applicative verbs (**pat-V* and **ch'en-a*), and at the end they became nominalized passives with the suffix *-VI*: *u-STEM-n-aj-VI*. The reconstructed forms would be translated as 'the built one of...' and 'the thing-made-settlement of...'.

of Western K'awil. Then he arrived at Ux Wintik and transformed the Copan Valley settlement, which became one of the most important sites in the Classic Maya Lowlands (Andrews & Fash 2005; Bell, Canuto & Sharer 2004; Davletshin n.d.; Stuart 2004a).¹⁰ In the text of Stela P it is told implicitly that Yax K'uk' Mo' brought the gods with him to found the site itself, and that the K'ahk' Uti' Chan Yopat performed the same event during his own reign, involving the remodelling of districts within the town and thus virtually became the new founder.

Recently, Tokovinine (2013: 64-65) has argued that the Copan emblem main sign was a name of the core area of the Principal Group, namely the region around Temple 11 where the dedication of the Holy T756[528]-**PUJ/pu** House, is mentioned in the text of sculpture CPN 3033. However, it is possible that the emblem main sign would indeed bear the name of an area wider than the Acropolis. I have suggested that the main sign of the emblem glyph may contain the morpheme *ch'up* 'valley' and that the who title was to be understood as 'Holy Valley Lord' (Bíró 2011b: 305). There is evidence that stelae and altars at Copan were erected outside the settlement, which is unusual, and that "they define the conceptual borders of the Copan urban area, name specific locations within the Copanec landscape, and sacralize that landscape by connecting those physical locations with mythological places" (Carter 2008; see also Wagner 2000).

Therefore, there are epigraphic data pointing to the conclusion that while there generally existed several subdivisions of the settlement, there usually was one emblem glyph used by the king of the site.¹¹ However, the use of the emblem glyphs at Dos Pilas and Copan differed, at least at the onset. In both cases, an intrusive elite settled the cities; however, in the former case it was the founder who operated his original place emblem glyph, whereas in the second it was the new king who used a newly created emblem glyph. In the early inscriptions of Copan, Yax K'uk' Mo' utilized a simple Ux Witz Ha' toponym, and later his descendants created the cultural memory of a group and projected the emblem glyph back to the founder. Maybe the new emblem glyph

10 The reconstruction of the lexemes from Classic Nawatl: Wakuxaj **wak(tli)* 'Falcon'; Kilikum **kil(tic)+*kum(atz)* from K'iche'an proper 'Green Snake'; Mapatz'in **māpa(chin)+*tz'in(tli)* 'Lord Raccoon'; K'alotz'in **tlālo(k)+*tz'in(tli)* 'Lord Tlālok'; Mala' **mal(li)+*tlah* 'Place of the Captives' and the last lexeme is a Classic Ch'olan Many-Cattail Place Lord (Bíró & Davletshin 2011).

11 There are other sites which have intra-toponyms. Usually, it is thought that the majority of place names are from outside the site, however there is data to suggest that sometimes such place names were intra- and not extra-toponyms. For example, I have proposed that B'akal (Palenque emblem glyph) was the name of a plateau criss-crossed by rivers such as Picota, Motiepa, Otolum, Piedras Bolas etc. Toktahn, Lakamha' (Otolum area), Sik'ab' (Group IV), K'an Tok (Temple XVI) and Uxte' K'uh (Temples XIX, XX and XXI) were the names of neighbourhoods within B'akal (Bíró 2012: 40-45). Indeed, from AD 431 to 496 two rulers of Palenque resided in the settlement of Toktahn and both used the title 'Holy Toktahn Lord'. Later Butz'aj Sak Chik settled on Lakamha' in AD 490 and later the kings dropped this title in the texts.

main sign referred to the valley or to the core area of the Acropolis, and the next generations decided to focus on the founder as *ochk'in kalomte'* who went to *Winte' Nah*, while they ignored or at least de-emphasized the original site of Yax K'uk' Mo' in their texts.

Deep time and ancestors

There are several examples in the Classic Maya texts where the current kings created a mythic history of the first ancestors in deep time (in terms of accession, other ceremonies and so on) and in consequence their place names seemed to already have existed in mythic times (Tokonivine 2013: 71-79). Piedras Negras Altar 1, dedicated in AD 692, mentions the same kind of events (period-ending ceremonies) which had happened in Yokib' (one of the two emblem glyphs of the city), and that the Holy Yokib' Ruler was the witness of the period ceremony in 4691 BC, 3114 BC, AD 297, AD 435, AD 514, AD 692 and AD 830 (Bíró 2011a: 54-55). At Copan, the emblem glyph main sign is mentioned in the text of Stela I, erected in AD 677. In that text, the current king and the ancestor realize the same event (the period-ending ceremony) at T756[528] (Schele & Looper 1996), but at different times. The first event before the period ceremony crucially occurred at Chih Ka'¹² and was initiated by K'ihnich Yajaw Ux Yop Hun, the mythical proto-king referred to in several texts from the Lowlands (Grube 2004). In every city where Yajaw Hun appears, he does so as the quasi-founder of the lineage, apart from the more distant ancestors and the 'real' founder. According to the archaeological and epigraphic data of this period of the settlement, Copan was a tiny village and there is no evidence that local society had a hierarchically distinct and superior king (Andrews & Fash 2005).

In one of the longest texts of Tikal, the Temple of the Inscriptions (Str. 6F-27), in a mythological story of several period-ending ceremonies the kings used the Mutul emblem glyph in the presence of the White Owl Ocelot (a mythical ancestor) (Helmke in press; Helmke & Nielsen 2013), in deep time (the first date is 1143 BC; Stuart 2007b), anachronistically attributing the place name of Tikal well into the Formative Period.

Often, these mythological texts did not mention the founder of the ruling family at a given site, but they referred to the (non-human) ancestors who bore the founder's emblem glyph. At Palenque, one of the ancestors dedicated the house used by the Holy B'akal Lord in 252 BC, although he was not the founder of the present dynasty (K'uk' B'alam lived in the 5th century AD; see also Helmke 2012: 95-100).

At Naranjo, there is more than one founder of the dynasty or *tz'akb'ul* number: the first ancestor was 'Square-nosed Beastie' and in several inscriptions the king had already

12 Possibly: "maguey grinder (place)". "[...] the geographic frame of reference for this 'maguey-grinder' place name still remains very unclear" (Stuart 2014).

been listed as the 35th in line in the 6th century, even though there was an ancestor whose *tz'akb'ul* number was in the 10ths in the early 6th century (Lopes 2005; Schele 1992; Tokovinine & Fialko 2007).¹³ The first founder of the Tikal dynasty lived around the 1st century AD (by the *tz'akb'ul* number), although his predecessors were also mentioned in several texts of an earlier date.

In summary, there were several ancestors of each ruling family and later kings usually used to project them into the deep time with the emblem glyph main sign, depending on the wish of the rulers. Furthermore, one of the ancestors was claimed later by the successors as more important than others, and they counted their dynastic position in reference to him utilizing the *tz'akb'ul* title; nevertheless, these were mythological rulers and even supernatural entities sometimes became ancestors.

Women and their children

Many scholars have described the status of women in Classic Maya society (Ardren 2002; Claassen & Joyce 1997; Miller & Martin 2004; Joyce 2001). At Tikal and Palenque, women of nobility occasionally became the rulers of the site. Women used the same titles as men (preceded by ix-) such as *sajal*, *ajk'uhun*, *ti' sak hun*, *kalomte'*, *ajaw* and so on, although several war-related titles (such as *ajtok'*, *bah pakal*, *lakam*, *ebet* etc.) were never carried by a female person. Some mothers became the quasi-regents of the site because their sons were immature, for example Ix Sak K'uk' of Palenque or the Ixwak Jalam Chan of Dos Pilas, at Naranjo (Martin & Grube 2008).

Curiously, the foreign queens did not 'bequeath' their emblem glyphs to their offspring, except at Yacxchilan. After the clash of Naranjo and Caracol in AD 682, Ixwak Jalam Chan (Ajaw) from Dos Pilas arrived at Naranjo with her fellow companions and their patron deities and re-founded the dynasty (Bíró 2011a: 41; Martin & Grube 2008: 74-75). Although she was from Dos Pilas and the daughter of B'ajlaj Chan K'awil, she used the Mutul emblem glyph. Her stelae at Naranjo and later kings' monuments referred to her as the Mutul Queen (*ixmutul ajaw*), but her son did not inherit her Mutul emblem glyph. It was her and her forebears who gave prestige to the descendants, in contrast to the future ruler who never utilized her emblem glyph. There was no pattern of double emblem glyphs in the texts, pairing off the title of Dos Pilas with that of Naranjo.

13 In 546, in the text of Altar 1, Aj Wosaj was the 35th ruler, yet in the 470s one of the kings had a 12th/13th successor title (Lopes 2005). If one counts the generation by 20 years and uses in the first (i.e. the longer) count, then the first king's accession would have happened in the 2nd century BC (AD 546 minus 35x20 = 154 BC), however if one employs the second count, the first ruler would have acceded in the 3rd century AD (470 minus 13/12x20 = AD 210/230).

Another example is the arrival of a foreign queen from Naman (La Florida) at Piedras Negras in AD 682 (Martin & Grube 2002: 74-75). Stela 8 mentioned the birth of Lady Winikhab' who used the emblem glyph of Naman or La Florida. She became the wife of the would-be king of Piedras Negras and later had her figure sculpted in stone at Stelae 1 and 3. The latter monument portrayed her and her daughter presumably sitting on a bench as members of a group performing the period-ending ceremony. Lady Winikhab' had used the emblem glyph of Naman as expected, but her daughter's emblem glyph then changed to the local one, that is Ix K'ihn Ajaw, which was used as one of the emblem glyphs of Piedras Negras (Jørgensen & Krempel 2014).

Presently, I do not know of any examples from the Classic Period texts that describe the bequeathal of the female emblem glyph to the descendants, with the exception of the Yaxchilan Y2 emblem glyph (Helmke 2012: 107-115). The queens in most cases operated their original emblem glyph instead. This process and pattern seemingly gave rise to the suggestion that the emblem glyph was a marker of identity and that the local emblem glyph was more important than the foreign one, even if the latter had more prestige in the historical situation than the local one.

Double emblem glyph: Piedras Negras, Bonampak and Yaxchilan

Piedras Negras

There are at least two emblem glyphs that were used by the rulers of the site and both occur in toponymic formulas with *ch'en* (Stuart 2004b; Stuart & Houston 1994: 31-33; Zender 2002: 170-176). The emblem glyphs are **K'UH-yo-ki-b'i-AJAW** and **K'IN-ni-AJAW**, while there are two more toponyms in the texts, namely **T5-TUN-ni** and **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni** (Figure 1).

The most frequent emblem glyph main sign is *yokib'*, a derived noun perhaps meaning 'canyon, entrance' (Stuart & Houston 1994: 31; Figure 1b). It is the only emblem glyph main sign (without the *k'uhul*) that occurred on Early Classic monuments in Piedras Negras and in Yaxchilan. Its first occurrence with the *k'uhul* adjective is found on Piedras Negras Stela 34, dated to AD 652.

Also, the use of *yokib'* as a direct toponym is restricted to the text of Piedras Negras Altar 1. The first example (in H2-I2) is a mythological ceremony (9.0.0.0 before the Creation date of 13.0.0.0) which took place in the Yokib' sky-cave (see the drawing in Stuart & Houston 1994: 34). The next occurrence is probably connected to a burial ritual, prior to which one Piedras Negras ruler, Yo'nal Ahkul, died (*ochb'ihaj*). The following funerary ceremony was overseen by a certain Uh B'ahlam who was in the company (*yitaj*) of other dignitaries. The date of death coincides with the period ending ceremony of 8.13.0.0 (AD 297) and the text ascertains that it happened in Yokib' (*uh'tiy yokib' chan ch'en*; Houston et al. 2003: 225; Stuart & Houston 1994: 34). Thus,

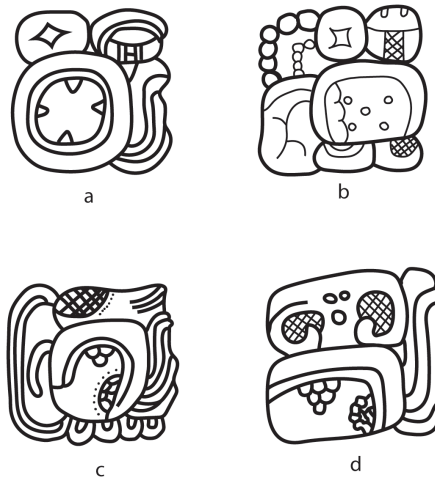


Figure 1. a: **K'IN-ni-AJAW**; b: **K'UH-yo-ki-b'i-AJAW-wa**; c: **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni-ji**; d: **T5-TUN-ni** (drawings by the author).

the monuments indicate that Yokib' was an emblem glyph main sign and a toponym. Until AD 608, the first monuments of Piedras Negras used *yokib'* as a place name; the **K'IN-ni** emblem is mentioned in later texts and projected back to the middle of the 6th century (Zender 2002: 170).

After a gap of almost five decades in the inscriptional record of Piedras Negras, Stela 25 was dedicated in AD 608, at the beginning of the Late Classic Period. The ruler's royal name K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahkul represents a continuation of the naming pattern of previous kings; however, he used only the **K'IN-ni-AJAW** emblem glyph, without the *k'uhul* adjective (Figure 1a). From this time onwards, all rulers of the site used both emblem glyphs in the narratives of contemporary and retrospective events, although **K'IN-ni-AJAW** was rarely combined with *k'uhul*. Moreover, this is the time period when the **K'IN-ni-a** or **K'IN-NAL** constructions began to show up in the inscriptions of other sites (Grube, Martin & Zender 2002: II-25; Zender 2002), but exclusively in the titles of nobles, such as *ch'ok*, *sajal*, and the 'carver' title. One of them was identified as a captive on the Palenque Hieroglyphic Stairway and called *ajk'ihn nal* in the 7th century, but most occurrences correspond to the 8th-century forms **K'IN-ni-a** and **AJ-K'IN-ni-a**. There is an indirect connection between this toponym and the rulers of Piedras Negras, namely that one of the captured *sajal* in Palenque was a subordinate of K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahkul II (Zender 2002: 175). There is an unprovenanced monument

that perhaps came originally from Chancal and which mentions an **AJ-K'IN-AJAW** with a non-royal title (the headband bird). The same expression might have been written on Piedras Negras Stela 18 in the name of ruler Tz'ak (Ha' K'in) Xok.

A third toponym appears frequently in the inscriptions of Piedras Negras and El Cayo (Stuart 2004b; Stuart 2007a; Figure 1d). It consists of the undeciphered T5 (Jaguar Paw) logogram and it ends with **TUN-ni**/*tun* 'stone', a perfect reference to Altar 4 of Piedras Negras, as was first shown by Stuart (2004b). The mentions of T5 Tun are dated very late: they occur on Piedras Negras Throne 1 (AD 785) and El Cayo Panel 1 (AD 775), and possibly also on Piedras Negras Stela 18 (Stuart 2004b). The first ruler referred to by the Jaguar Paw Stone was Yo'nal Ahkul III (AD 758-767) and two successive rulers, Tz'ak Xok (AD 767-780) and Yat Ahkul III (AD 781-808), mentioned it in their texts.

The fourth toponym, **mu-k'i**/*muk'*, is found only on Piedras Negras Stela 25 in AD 603 and is the name of the place of the inauguration event of K'inich Yo'nal Ahkul I (Figure 1c). Tokovinine (2013) has suggested that this is a phonetic reading of T5 or Jaguar Paw. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for this in the inscription at the moment.¹⁴

It follows that there are two emblem glyphs of Piedras Negras, one of them being based on a *ch'en* (*yokib'*), and that there are two toponyms, among them another *ch'en* (Jaguar Paw Stone). Recently, Tokovinine (2013) has argued that the Jaguar Paw Stone represented the name of the Piedras Negras itself and that Yokib' was an unidentified place of origin of the dynasty. There is evidence that one of the earlier rulers, Yat Ahkul I, settled at Jaguar Paw Stone around AD 450 (Stuart 2004b).

I have argued before that each toponym referred to one of the neighbourhoods of Piedras Negras (Bíró 2012: 51; Figure 2). The South Group was Yokib', close to the curve of the river and to the *bajo* areas (Nelson 2005) where the earliest monument was erected and which, according to the ceramic findings, was the earliest settlement within the site (in the Preclassic and Early Classic period; Houston et al. 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2003). The **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni** was only mentioned on Stela 26 in front of R-9, a huge pyramid in the South Group. Maybe Muk'/Much' Tun was the name of R-9, meaning either 'Big Stone' or 'Piled-up Stone(s)'.

¹⁴ On Stela 26 (block D1), there is the spelling **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni-ji**. *Muk'* in Greater Tzeltalan and Yucatekan is "fuerzas, grande" (Kaufman & Justeson 2003: 1392). *Much'* in Cholan and Yucatekan languages is 'pile up' (Kaufman & Norman 1984: 126).

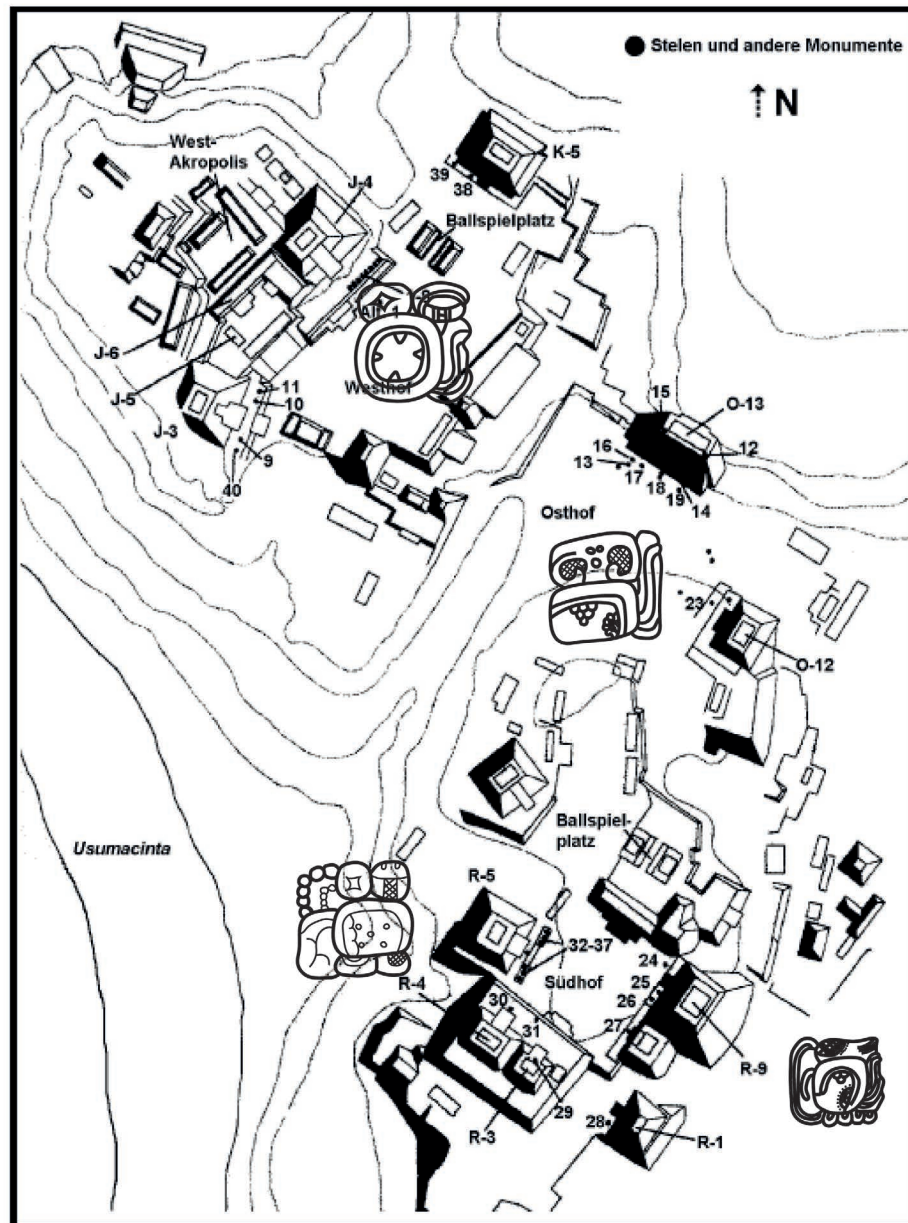


Figure 2. Piedras Negras Map with the neighbourhoods (modified from Teufel 2004: 15).

The West Group (the Acropolis and the surroundings of K-5) was close to another *bajo* area with an unusual number of sweat baths, and Zender (2002: 175-176) has suggested that the name of this area was K'ihn Ha', 'Hot or Warm Water'. I think that K'ihn Ha' was the name of the West Group where the Early and Late Classic palace was built.

Finally, Jaguar Paw Stone was the name of the East Group that was founded by Yat Ahkul I around AD 450, and one of the earliest buildings there was Ho' Janab' Witz (O-13) which was constructed around AD 514 (Tokovinine 2013: 75).

The East and South Groups had temple-mound structures, but the West Group was inhabited by a considerable amount of people. The kings did not erect monuments in the South Group after AD 600, while the West Group was ceremonially occupied from the Late Classic until the last ruler. After AD 600, the neighbourhood where the kings performed ceremonies shifted from the South Group to the West and East Groups, while the latter neighbourhood became the focus of ceremonies of the three last rulers after their father, Ruler 4, had been buried under the plaza floor in front of Str. O-13.

The history and development of the site suggest that Yokib' was the oldest sector, but that the West Group (K'ihn Ha') slowly became the most important neighbourhood, although the East Group was also a prominent ceremonial location, especially in the 8th century. Major destruction occurred again in Piedras Negras in AD 564, when the Pomona army razed several buildings and also erased the earlier inscriptions. After the period of calamity, the new king utilized the K'ihn Ajaw as a new beginning. However, he still used the ancient emblem glyph to continue the link to the deep past.

Bonampak

Bonampak is located in the Selva Lacandona, close to the Lacanha River and the Sierra Cojolita in Chiapas. Presently, there are several inscribed monuments at the site: four panels, five stelae, four lintels and the famous mural of Structure 1 (Arellano Hernández 1998; Mathews 1980). Lintel 4 (AD 603) and Panel 2 (ca. AD 605) were commissioned by Yajaw Chan Muwan I (AD 600-605), Panel 4 (AD 614) by Aj-? Nal (AD 605-614), Panel 5 (AD 648) by Winikhab' Tok' (AD 643-648) and Panel 1 (AD 692) by Ajixim K'ey (AD 683-692; Bíró 2007b). Later, after a gap of more than 70 years, Stelae 1, 2, 3, 5 and 15 and Lintels 1, 2 and 3 were produced under the reign of Yajaw Chan Muwan II (AD 776-790), and the murals were painted during the reign of the latest ruler, who acceded to the throne in AD 790 and dedicated the building in AD 791 (Bíró 2011a: 252-266; Houston 2012).

The rulers of Bonampak used two emblem glyphs, Xukalnah and Ak'e (Arellano Hernández 1998; Beliaev & Safronov 2004; Bíró 2007b, 2011a; Mathews 1980; Figure 3). The Ak'e emblem glyph is always written with two syllabograms, **a-k'e**; it is combined with the *ajaw* title and the *k'uhul* adjective in Bonampak (Figure 3a). The

spelling of Xukalnah is more varied, but in most cases it is written with the syllabograms **xu-ka-la** and the logogram **NAH** for ‘house’. It stands with *k’uhul*, *ajaw*, and also with the agentive prefix *aj-* (Figure 3b). Neither of the emblem glyph main signs appear in a toponymic formula, nor are they used with *ch’en*.

After the work of Stuart (2007a), it is known that the name of the site was Vulture Hill (Usij Witz), the only toponym mentioned in the Bonampak texts (Figure 3c). The double emblem glyph pattern occurred after 776, while previously the rulers of Bonampak only used the Xukalnah emblem glyph. The double emblem glyph was utilised by the last three rulers.

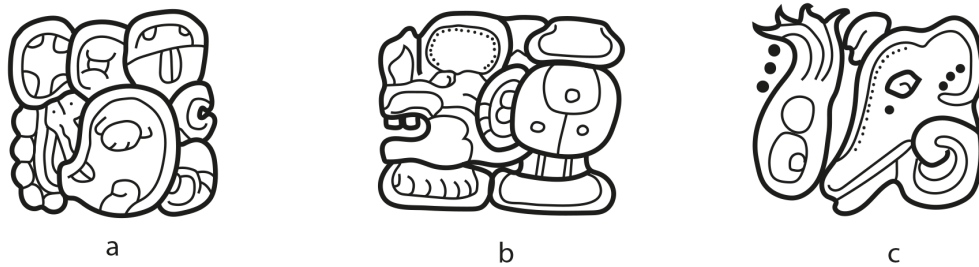


Figure 3. a: **K’UH-a-k’e-AJAW-wa**; b: **xu-ka-la-NAH**; c: **u-USIJ[WITZ]**
(drawings by the author).

According to the seminal research by Beliaev & Safronov (2004), there are various other place names mentioned in the text of the Selva Lacandona area whose rulers used the Xukalnah Lord title: Xukalnah (Lacanha), B’ub’ul Ha’ (probably Ojo de Agua), Saklakal, (Payal) Jukub’ (probably La Casada), Knot-Site (probably Nuevo Jalisco), Ta’ and Oxlahuntun (Bíró 2011a).¹⁵ This complex political situation is very similar to that of Tikal and Dos Pilas, or to that of Palenque, Tortuguero and Comalcalco (see above).

15 The earliest period of the sites of the region is almost unknown because of the total lack of stratigraphical excavations in Bonampak or Plan de Ayutla; in other sites, nothing is known about the archaeological history, save what emerges from intermittent inspections and surface data collections. Therefore, any epigrapher venturing into the reconstruction of the elite portion of the history of the region faces all sorts of problems, and the resulting work is very speculative (Bíró 2011a). However, the importance of the Selva Lacandona area during the Classic Period should not be underestimated. The earliest texts are inscribed on the only monument from the 5th century in the entire region which was found by looters and dates to AD 498. One speculative hypothesis about the early history of the region has recently been proposed by Peter Mathews (personal communication 2005) who has suggested that the original inhabitants of the region were ‘pushed’ into the Selva Lacandona by intrusive elite and non-elite populations coming out of the Northeast Peten. Living in a border zone, they founded small settlements which later became the home of a vigorous artistic tradition as their rulers imitated their much wealthier neighbours of the Usumacinta River and beyond.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence to prove at which site the Xukalnah dynasty originally settled, but the first monuments located in Lacanha in AD 593 (Stela 7, AD 593) and in the surrounding villages of the same period (Ojo de Agua Stela 1, AD 588 and Brussel Stela, AD 593) were the first to refer to Xukalnah in their texts. Furthermore, there is evidence that the founder of the Xukalnah dynasty ruled around AD 400 (Ojo de Agua Stela 1, the seventh successor title; B     2011a: 69). These lords had used the *yajawte'* title and they were either the vassals of Xukalnah or Ak'e (B     2011a: 100-101). This title was one of the earliest non-royal offices used from the 5th century onward, and some of those who used it became prestigious captives in the texts of the Early Classic Yaxchilan lintels (Lintels 37 and 35, Ruler 8 to Ruler 10, ca. AD 480-537).

The first inscriptions mentioning the rulers of Ak'e were dedicated by a subordinate (*a'nab'*) named K'an Tatb'u Max in AD 498 and 521. This is in compliance with some early texts of Yaxchilan, where Ak'e is said to have been an ally and/or enemy of the 6th, 9th and 10th ruler. Combining the information of the Yaxchilan lintels with that of the monuments of K'an Tatb'u Max, it becomes possible to reconstruct a partial ruler list of Ak'e: Yaxun B'ahlam (pre-AD 454), K'ihnich Yat Ahkul (AD 498-521) and Knot B'ahlam (AD 537-572).

The Ak'e and Xukalnah emblem glyphs were not used as a double emblem glyph of the rulers of the Selva Lacandona until the AD 720s, but afterwards the Sak Tz'i' ruler employed them in his title sequence in AD 726 (B     2005; 2011a).¹⁶ The last monument on which a king used the independent Ak'e emblem was dedicated in AD 715 and from then on the Ak'e lord title was always put together with other emblem glyphs (Sak Tz'i' and Xukalnah).

My speculative take on this history is that after the main branch of Ak'e had become extinct, the other houses probably wanted to claim the empty throne, thus starting a conflict which eventually turned into factional wars, with the more powerful polities naturally exacerbating the conflicts. There were at least three houses which allegedly claimed the Ak'e lord title: Usij Witz (Bonampak), Knot-Site (Nuevo Jalisco?) and Payal Jukub' (La Cascada?). The Knot-Site was subordinate to Sak Tz'i', Usij Witz was a vassal of Yaxchilan, and Payal Jukub' was an enemy of Yaxchilan.

This war against the Sak Tz'i'-Knot-Site alliance culminated in AD 748 and 787 and one of the battles was represented in the mural of Room 2 in Bonampak. Before that, Yajaw Chan Muwan II (AD 776-790) had carefully selected and relocated the 7th century monuments and installed Panel 2 in front of his stela (Toval  n & Villareal 2002). It is crucial that his father Yajaw Chan Muwan I (AD 600-605) of Panel 2, who resided in Usij Witz, had the Holy Ak'e Lord title (*k'uhul ak'e ajaw*). Therefore, the Ak'e emblem glyph in

16 This complex and confusing history not only relates to the local empowered house of Sak Tz'i', but also to other, more potent kingdoms such as Yaxchilan, Tonina and Piedras Negras (B     2011a).

Bonampak came from the male ancestor, or at least Yajaw Chan Muwan II declared this to be the case in his carefully repositioned claim to the right to both of the emblem glyphs.

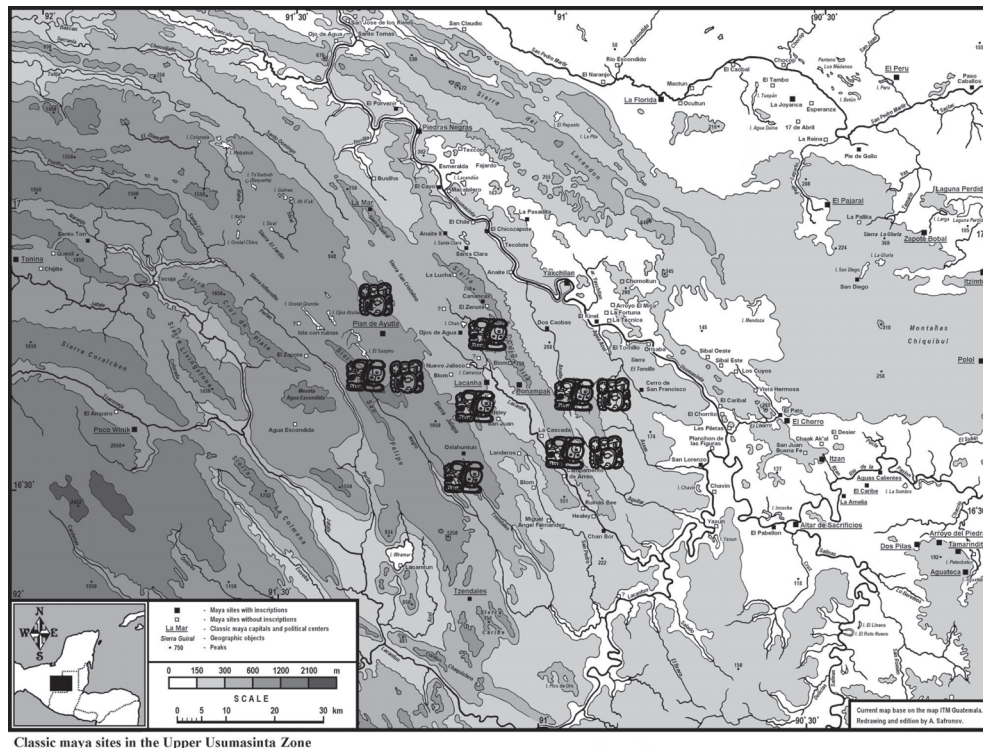


Figure 4. Map of the Western Region with the Ak'e and Xukalnaah emblem glyphs (modified from Safronov n.d.).

This pattern of the double emblem glyphs differed slightly from the Piedras Negras example, namely in Piedras Negras the double emblem glyph was created by the kings to found several neighbourhoods, while in Bonampak the kings had the right to use them because a forebear's father had one of the emblem glyphs. Perhaps the kings of Ak'e and their children married into other lineages. This criss-cross web of marriage would then trigger factional wars between the branches of the Ak'e family and many of the sub-lineages would fight about the inheritance of the ancestors' land (maybe Plan de Ayutla; Figure 4). In Bonampak, the emblem glyph emerged as a marker of identity among the elite who were in some way represented in the inscriptions of Bonampak and other sites, inscriptions that also indicate that one of the processes to create a double emblem glyph pattern was factional war. The king paid homage to the memory of the ancestors and he willingly invested in it, for example when he relocated a 150-year-old monument in front of his stela.

Yaxchilan

Yaxchilan is another site that had two emblem glyphs, one of which has been deciphered by Boot (2004) and Martin (2004) as **K'UH-PA'CHAN-AJAW**, while the other is the still undeciphered **K'UH-T511-ji-AJAW** (Figure 5). Many have dealt with the chronological and spatial distributions of the Yaxchilan emblem glyphs (Helmke 2012; Mathews 1997: 68; Schüren 1992). Mathews has concluded that the distribution of the emblem glyph main signs showed only two patterns and that Pa'chan was the only one mentioned in foreign sites, while T511-ji was connected to women.



Figure 5. a: **K'UH-PA'CHAN-AJAW-wa**; b: **K'UH-T511-AJAW**
(drawings by the author).

Schüren (1992) went further in her investigation and proposed the existence of two separate sites, Pa'chan and T511-ji, suggesting that at least two women, Ix Pakal and Ix Chak Jolom from T511-ji had married into the royal family of Pa'chan. This resulted in the joining of the two polities during the reign of Itzamnaj B'ahlam III (AD 681-742), who in his inscriptions projected this political situation back into the past. Finally, she noted that T511-ji might have been the name of the unlocated Laxtunich (Schüren 1992: 37). Regarding the discussion above, it is highly unlikely that the emblem glyph of the queen was joined into the double emblem glyphs because it is most probable that it was the male ancestor who was key to developing this pattern.

As an alternative to these interpretations, there is now enough evidence to suggest that both emblem glyphs were used simultaneously at El Zotz in the 5th century, which points to the possible origin of that particular branch of the Yaxchilan dynasty (Bíró 2011a: 47-54; Houston 2008). Furthermore, Stuart (2007a: 31) has recently shown that there were two dynastic counts at Yaxchilan (as recorded on Dos Caobas Stela 1): one counting fifteen rulers from Yopat B'ahlam, who was a *k'uhul pa'chan ajaw*, and a second one counting more than twenty rulers from a *k'uhul T511-ji ajaw*. Interestingly, the two numbers are different, as are the forebears they refer to. Although this monu-

ment was made later in the Late Classic Period, the Yopat B'ahlam and the second ruler already had both emblem glyphs in the Hieroglyphic Stairway 1.

Nevertheless, the theory of the El Zotz origin makes it likely that neither Pa'chan nor T511-ji were place names referring to Yaxchilan or any other site in the region, but that they were toponyms in the Peten. According to Houston (2008), that was the place of origin of the family that had lived in Bejucal and subsequently resettled to El Zotz around AD 500. Currently there is one stela from Bejucal which mentions Chak Kab'koh Ahkul in AD 393, who was a vassal of Sihyaj K'ahk', the ostensible Teotihuacan general. His son, Sihyaj Chan Ahkul, was mentioned on the wooden lintel of El Zotz and an unprovenanced pyrite mirror dated ca. AD 450 (Bíró 2011a: 52-53).

Yopat B'ahlam, the dynastic founder of the Yaxchilan dynasty, ruled in the first half of the 4th century. At present, there is no evidence that he had moved out of the El Peten area; however, one of the branches of the family might have migrated to the Usumacinta River, bringing both emblem glyphs with them, as in the example of Dos Pilas. Pa'chan was not just a foreign title referring to the founder, but also the name of the new site., It is mentioned twice on Lintel 25 (*tahn ha' pa'chan and yohl tahnah tahn ha' pa'chan*) and it is referred to as the *kab'-ch'en* of Itzamnaj B'ahlam III.

Another interpretation has recently been put forward by Helmke (2012: 100-116) when he suggested that both emblem glyphs ultimately name mythological places. Pa'chan may have been the toponym of the origin at San Bartolo, and was subsequently used by different royal lineages at multiple sites in the central lowlands. The second undeciphered emblem glyph is mentioned in several texts as a mythological locality in the distant past, confirming the mythological quality of that toponym. As such, it is also possible that several ruling families used these mythological places to boost their power and that they were not related by blood in any way. Irrespective of whether these localities were deemed to be mythological or not, the kings of the Classic period utilized these in their texts the same way as other rulers of the Lowlands did; in other words, the main signs have functioned as place names creating the mark of the cultural memory and the identity of the groups.

There are also indications that Yaxchilan had its own sub-divisions with different toponyms. As Stuart pointed out, there is a third emblem glyph connected to one ruler of the city (Itzamnaj B'ahlam II) which can be read as *k'uhul muwan ajaw* also mentioned on an unprovenanced hieroglyphic stairway block possibly coming from El Chorro (Stuart 2007a: 39). On Yaxchilan Stela 4, a Muwan bird is topped with a Pa'chan glyph which probably indicates a specific place within Yaxchilan (Stuart 2007a: 4). A similar iconographic representation occurs on the back of Stela 7 and on Step III of Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, where a place name that probably reads Ahin Ha' indicates the scene of the event mentioned on the base of the monument.

At Yaxchilan, a complex pattern concerning the use of emblem glyph main signs emerges. The Yaxchilan emblem glyphs may originally have emerged in the central Peten, potentially in the El Zotz region or the San Bartolo area, but a migrating branch of royals has brought them to Yaxchilan later. In addition, there is some data to suggest that they referred to different royal families, and that Pa'chan was more important to the rulers of Yaxchilan. In the inscriptions of Yaxchilan designating various areas of the site, there are candidates for names of local places or the site itself; however, Pa'chan became the more encompassing toponym among several others for the Late Classic Period.

This pattern again differs slightly from the two examples above (Piedras Negras and Bonampak), but it is still difficult to determine where the place name came from and why both titles remained in vogue at Yaxchilan and El Zotz.

Conclusion

Considering the above discussion, I must acknowledge that the examples seemingly lead readers to believe that there was no historical evolution of the usage of the emblem glyph from the Early Classic to the Terminal Classic Period. The reason for this is that I have not collected every example, but I have listed a variety of cases from particular cities where the rulers operated the emblem glyphs in question.

Some developments can indeed be discerned from these examples: first, the kings transformed already existing (mythological) places into real places; later in the 5th century, some of them went to other regions, and during this time, they often added the *k'uhul* adjective to their glyphs, in the original territory and the newly founded kingdoms. In the Early Classic and, more frequently, in the Late Classic Period a process started in which the rulers – by conquest, alliance, marriage or ancient past history – absorbed one or more emblem glyphs into their nominal phrases. The question is why the pattern of the double emblem glyph was practised in the Western Region and the Petexbatun area (Machaquila and Cancuen) and why the non-royal nobles play a conspicuously unusual role in the discourse (Bíró 2011a; Jackson 2013).

Collective memory is inherently connected to collective identity or the belief in the existence of a we-consciousness (Assmann 2004: 151). Identity is strongly connected to politics, and political organisation. Classic Period Maya writing is therefore a repository of collective memories and collective identities, a form of organising and presenting the elite to themselves, to outsiders, and to other parts of the society.

The emblem glyph was *per se* one of the quintessential elements of the elite group, which was organised as a community of collective memory attached to specific spaces and times. The emblem glyph was a place name and it had a history in the past, the present and the future. It existed in mythical times and appeared together with the gods and past-kings in order to legitimate the later rulers.

A toponym/emblem glyph main sign can be asserted to have existed within one well-defined spatial category, the *ch'en* and its multiple variants combined with *kab'* and *chan*. It is hard to discern an evolving change in the conceptualisation of this particular entity and its reference is not very clear. I have argued elsewhere that all of its variants refer to inhabited places in a general sense, places inhabited not only by humans but also by non-human deities (Bíró 2007a, 2011a, 2012).

While *ch'en* certainly means a natural phenomenon with a semantic field of 'cave, pool' and thus refers to an empty or filled cavity, it went into the semantic construction of 'inhabited place'. It is important to make a difference between *chan/kab'-ch'en* and various suffixes such as *-ul* and *-il*, which form place names and probably carry a very general meaning of 'place'.

However, there is a more real concept that underlines this metaphorical principle, namely that of the origin of the rulers and also of the people, who ultimately came from a cave (Bassie-Sweet 1991, 1996; Brady & Prufer 2005; Prufer & Brady 2005).

I have argued that the *ch'en* was a community where the elite person had his/her court and conjured the god/ancestor (*k'uh*, *mam* and *wahy*), an *ajaw* who proclaims, fights and builds (*patnaj* and *ch'enaj* in Copan). This community usually consisted of one family and servants and was a segment of the polity. According to the texts, there were no small or big *ch'en* (**b'ikit ch'en* or **noh ch'en*), but only more additions such as *chan* or *kab'*. Of course, the settlement grew over time and it had several *ch'en*, possessed either by the ruling family, one of its branches, or non-royal nobles. To have a polity, it was necessary to have *ajawill/ajawlel*, a line of descent from of lords into which somebody could insert him/herself (*tz'akb'ul* title).

Every lord was connected to an inhabited built place or a cave (*ch'en*) where his/her ancestors dwelt, but not necessarily to the place where the actual lord resided. This is one of the most important characteristics of the concept of the Classic Period polity. The original *ch'en* is the name of the royal house, its origin place, which can easily be moved to other built places. Emblem glyphs are 'places of origin' which are transported across the landscape by the movement of a royal line. The most conspicuous examples of this process can be found in several cases, such as Tikal, Calakmul, Bonampak and Yaxchilan as well as elsewhere.

These 'transported' titles sometimes combined not just one, but two emblem glyphs used by the ruler, which is a result of the complex history of factional wars/or other mechanisms where the members of the family left (*lok'oyi*) the ancestral city (*ch'en*) to arrive (*huli*)/settle (*kajiyi?*) elsewhere and start a branch of the royal line and founded a new settlement (*ch'en*). This remembrance of politics was one of the most important tasks of the scribes and the priests who wrote up memory and proclaimed it to insiders and outsiders.

This matrix of *ch'en* and *ajawill'el* (and the derivations) combined a spatial and an institutional concept of polity formation. It did not involve demarcation or territorialisation, but building plazas, temples and palaces in order to transform the landscape. Where buildings stood, humans formed a polity.

This migration or diaspora (spread-out from a place of origin) occurred from the Northeast Peten to the surrounding areas in the Early Classic period, first to the Western Region and the Southeast Region, and lastly to the Northern Yucatan. The first founders and their successors carved the *ch'en* out of the unordered spatial plane and the flow of time. The political strategy was to implement dynastic rule and for the non-royal and local nobles to become the companions of the king in the public transcript. More and more non-royal elite used the politically imbued expressions (*ila*, *kab'i*, *ichnal*) and transmitted possession (*yajaw*, *usajal* etc).

The rulers had obligations towards those living in the community and these sometimes could be quite onerous. They had to repair, build, and produce. What remains is more of a common belief than enforcement. This system was quite stable and attractive enough to expand continually, which resulted in the organization of an ever higher number of persons. There is no indication that the Southern Maya Lowlands became over-populated by the end of the 8th century. Rather, the 'side-effects' of this 'forest of kings and nobles' resulted in a situation where conflict upon conflict added to the change of climate. The frequency of conflicts did not increase; rather, it was the number of the participants that grew substantially. A more densely populated landscape did not leave as many opportunities for a strategy of hit-and-sack-then-recuperate, neither for the nobles (who recorded this particular tactic in their inscriptions), nor for the non-elite.

Even when the kings of Calakmul or Tikal had conquered several cities, they never prohibited the use of the emblem glyphs of the defeated kings, and in the Western Region the most powerful cities were left to use the toponym of the non-royals in their texts. Sometimes, after the defeat of the local ruler, the succeeding kings used the foreign emblem glyph, as it was the case in Seibal; however, in the latter case, a new arrival took up the original emblem glyph in the Terminal Classic and famously celebrated the period ending.

In this chapter, I have argued that the emblem glyph had been the most important identity marker of a group, and this could be the answer to why the people of the Classic Maya Lowlands were never mentioned in the inscriptions by the overarching ethnic self-name. Indubitably, there were regional names; but were they a marker of ethnic identity or of other (cultural?) features?

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